

October 30, 2013

Honorable Amada Price, Chairwoman
Michigan State House Local Government Committee
Anderson House Office Building
N-1193 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

RE: Support for “Blight Elimination” Legislation, SB 35-39

Dear Chairwoman Price:

On behalf of the City of Detroit, I am writing to express support for SB 35-39, the “Blight Elimination” bills that are pending before the House Local Government Committee.

The City of Detroit has been working with the State Legislature for ten years now to empower home rule cities, like the City of Detroit, with the tools to stamp out blight in our communities. This collaboration between the City of Detroit and the State Legislature began in 2003 with the initial passage of Public Acts 2003, No. 316, which amended Chapter 117, Home Rule City Act, to allow home rule cities to establish administrative hearings bureaus to adjudicate blight violation ordinances. The City of Detroit established its Department of Administrative Hearings in 2005 and the City has heard over 500,000 blight cases.

Neighborhoods that are clean and properly maintained continue to be the highest priority for the City of Detroit. The viability of the City of Detroit and its success at restoring Detroit to a great city depend on the local government possessing the legal tools to enforce laws requiring property owners to maintain their property. The blight violation enforcement tools granted by the State Legislature in 2003 were an important first step. The provisions in SB 35-39 are important next steps in completing the necessary toolbox that cities need to enforce property-related, blight ordinances. Particularly, it is imperative that cities have the ability to access a streamlined garnishment and lien process so that the full power of state judgment enforcement will serve as a strong incentive for property owners to comply with blight ordinances and judgments.